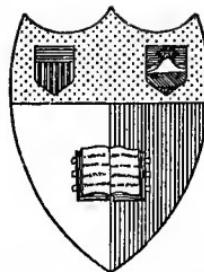


# Shakespeare in Limerick

*By* BRAINERD McKEE

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# Shakespeare in Limerick

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BY

BRAINERD MCKEE  
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1910

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*To My Mother*







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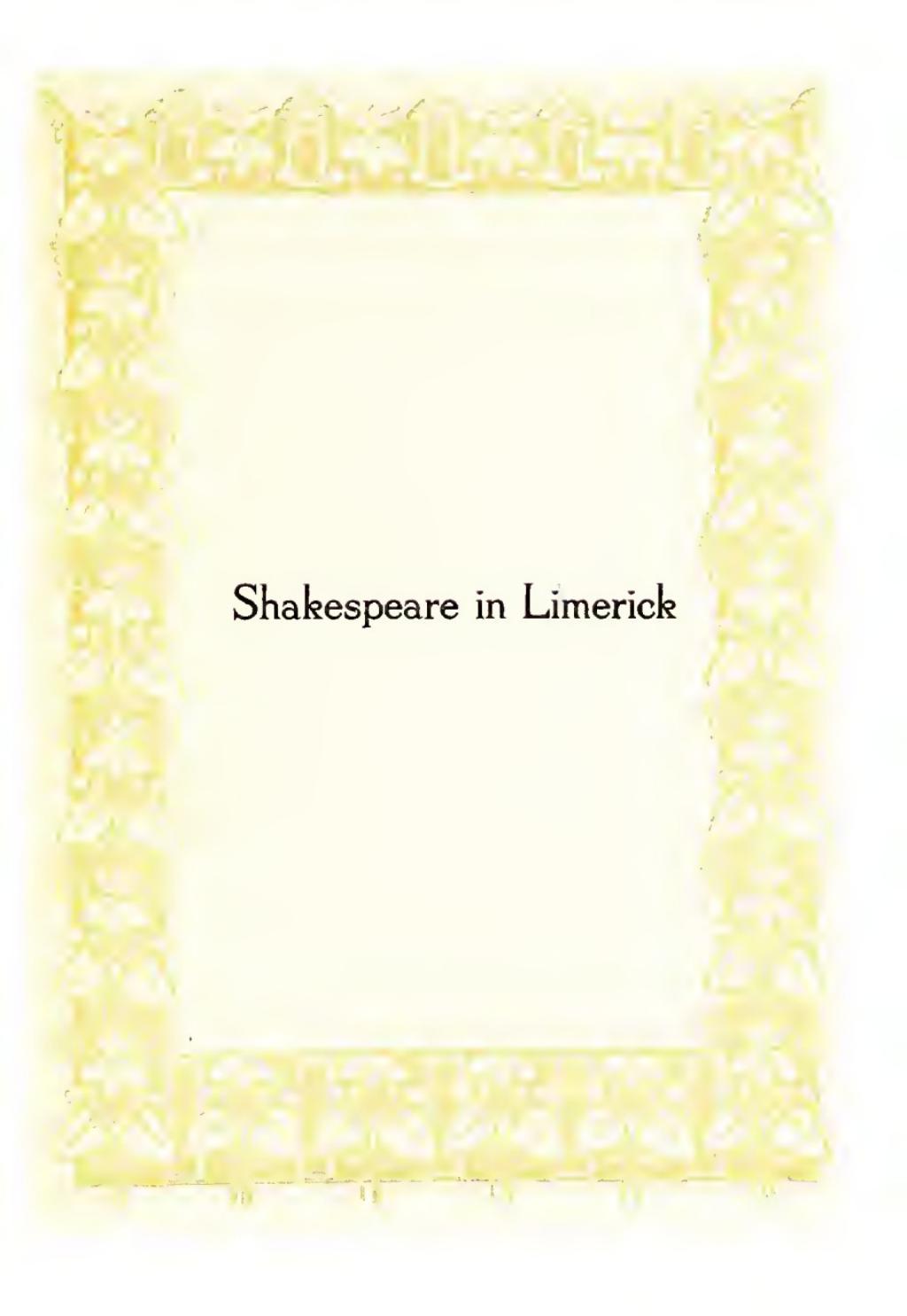


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# Shakespeare in Limerick



I.

THE TEMPEST

There once was a girl named Miranda  
Who flirted with one Ferdinand, a  
Shipwrecked young prince  
Who, after a rinse,  
Played chess with her on the veranda.

II.

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

There once were two gents from Verona  
Who both tried to telephone a  
Message of love  
To the same turtle-dove,  
And in their warm hearts to enthrone her.



### III.

#### THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

There was a fat man they called Falstaff:  
When he walked he carried a tall staff,  
And this made him lean—  
That is—I mean—  
It made him lean on the tall staff.

### IV.

#### MEASURE FOR MEASURE

There once was a Duke of Vienna  
Who dressed in a costume of senna:  
A reformer was he;  
And he worked like a bee  
To save the old town from Gehenna.



V.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

There once was a couple of twins  
Who looked as alike as two pins—  
Pardon me, please—  
I should have said “p’s”  
But the rhyme there required the pins.

VI.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

There once was a miserly bachelor  
Who carried his heart in a satchel or  
Small trunk, perhaps,  
Secured well by straps,  
Till 'twas stole by a maid from said  
bachelor.



## VII.

### LOVE'S LABOR'S LOST

Some men once engaged in love's labor:  
They didn't use pickaxe or sabre:  
Their labor was lost:  
When they counted the cost,  
'Twas the price of a pipe and a tabor.

## VIII.

### A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

There was an Athenian weaver  
Who worked at his trade like a beaver,  
Till one night 'twas his luck  
To become stage-struck,  
Mistaking the stage for a lever.



## IX.

### THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

There once was a covetous Jew :  
When some money he lent became due,  
And his man couldn't pay,  
The Jew then did say,  
"For a pound of your flesh I will sue."

## X.

### AS YOU LIKE IT

There once was a forest called Arden  
Where one day there strolled a bard in  
And tacked verses on trees—  
He was chased by some bees  
And was also pursued by the warden.



## XI.

### THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

A tinker named Christopher Sly,  
Who drank too much liquor when dry,  
    Dreamed of taming a shrew;  
    But it didn't come true,  
For he hadn't the courage to try.

## XII.

### ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

There once was a girl they called Helen,  
And she was in trouble—yes, well in;  
    But though in so tight,  
    She got out all right;  
So it didn't much matter she fell in.



### XIII.

#### TWELFTH NIGHT

There once was a girl in Illyria,  
Whose flirting so greatly did weary a  
Bachelor duke  
That he didn't rebuke,  
But wed her, to ward off hysteria.

### XIV.

#### THE WINTER'S TALE

There once were two kings had a  
scrimmage  
(Who lived in a distant and dim age)  
About one king's wife:  
She died—then showed life  
By appearing on Earth as an image.



XV.

KING JOHN

England once had a king called John,  
But never a second one;  
For he was so bad,  
If another they'd had,  
The land to the dogs would have gone.

XVI.

KING RICHARD II

There was a king called Richard Second  
But away from his throne he was beckoned;  
Then shut in a tower,  
Where, robbed of his power,  
Among the “resigned” he was reckoned.



## XVII.

### KING HENRY IV.

A Henry whose number was four  
Spent much time in shedding of gore;  
    He did it in war,  
    And though none knew what for,  
He constantly clamored for more.

## XVIII.

### KING HENRY V

There once was a king called Fifth Harry  
Who sword-thrusts neatly could parry  
    And it helped him (this thing)  
    To succeed as a king,  
And it also did help him to marry.



## XIX.

### KING HENRY VI

A king known as Harry VI  
Would sit on his throne and would sigh,  
Till one Dick came along  
And stopped his sad song  
By saying, "Your place I'll supply."

## XX.

### KING RICHARD III.

There once was a monarch named Dick :  
To his kingdom he didn't long stick ;  
For he offered his crown  
For a horse (marked down),  
Thus ending his reign very quick.



XXI.

KING HENRY VIII.

A king they called Bluff King Hal  
Was a very congenial pal  
When he had his own way,  
But when one said him nay  
Quite a different person was Hal.

XXII.

ROMEO AND JULIET

There once was a young girl called  
Juliet :  
Were she living, she'd be a fool yet.  
She played dead in a tomb,  
Which proved her real doom,  
And that was the end of Miss Juliet.



## XXIII.

### OTHELLO

There once was a man named Othello,  
An outrageously jealous old fellow:  
    When they told him some lies,  
    Quite green turned his eyes,  
And like a great bull he did bellow.

## XXIV.

### KING LEAR

There once was a monarch named Lear  
Whose manner of ruling was queer:  
    Some daughters he had:  
    Said they, "Dad is mad—  
'Tis high time that we interfere."



XXV.

MACBETH

There once was a bad Thane of Fife  
Who had an old witch for a wife ;  
She, and three other witches,  
By deeds dark as pitch is,  
Plunged the country in warfare and strife.

XXVI.

TIMON OF ATHENS

There once was a man they called Timon—  
(How the deuce shall I get a rhyme in?)  
Who squandered his all  
On a Bachelor's Hall  
Instead of donating to Hymen.



## XXVII.

### HAMLET

There once was a gloomy young Dane  
Who all frolic and fun did disdain;  
In his dictionary  
You couldn't find "merry,"  
And "pleasure" defined he as "pain."

## XXVIII.

### TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

There once was a girl named Cressida  
Who wasn't at all bona fide;  
Troilus did woo  
Her, but found her untrue,  
And was very sorry he tried her.



## XXIX.

### CYMBELINE

There once was a king of old Britain  
Who had a mug like a mitten:  
By which statement glean  
That his quarrelsome queen  
So remarked, though 'tisn't so written.

## XXX.

### CORIOLANUS

There existed one Coriolanus:  
Folks said, "This man does disdain us—  
He gives us but sneers—  
He's proud, it appears;  
And pride is a crime that is heinous."



## XXXI.

### JULIUS CÆSAR

There once was a Roman named Cæsar  
Who had a nose like a tweezer:  
    He ended his life  
    Disobeying his wife,  
When he went to the Senate to tease her.

## XXXII.

### ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

There was an Egyptian queen—  
The fairest (they say) ever seen;  
    But though she was pretty,  
    And also was witty,  
She was most unaccountably mean.



### XXXIII.

#### PERICLES

There once was a young Prince of Tyre,  
And he was the son of his sire ;  
He was called Pericles :  
He will always please ;  
For he Shakespeare and me did inspire.

### XXXIV.

#### VENUS AND ADONIS

A hunter there was named Adonis  
Whose fate by the following shown is :  
He was chased by a *boar*,  
And pursued by a *bore* :  
That the latter was Venus well known is.



XXXV.

LUCRECE

A lady there was named Lucrece  
Who resided at Rome or at Greece—  
(Which place doesn't matter—  
I just put the latter  
For rhyme's sake—it might have been Nice).

XXXVI.

SONNETS

Bill Shakespeare wrote many a sonnet:  
He gave one, instead of a bonnet,  
Each Easter to Anne—  
He gave it—then ran—  
And left her to meditate on it.



### XXXVII.

#### A LOVER'S COMPLAINT

A lover once made a complaint  
So tedious it made persons faint---  
That is, those who heard  
To the very last word;  
For the patience 'twould try of a saint.

### XXXVIII.

#### THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM

There once was a passionate pilgrim,  
So sad he'd have made Jack or Jill grim;  
But Shakespeare just wrote  
For a twenty-pound note  
This stuff, so it didn't make Bill grim.













